

# **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE**

## **BRAZIEL CREEK INSTREAM FLOW**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Headquarters, Helena  
November 2, 2015**

### **Proposed Actions**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has proposed a project that is administrative in nature: an instream flow lease. The lease will be on Braziel Creek (Powell County), a tributary to Nevada Creek that supports a nearly pure strain of westslope cutthroat trout. Flow monitoring in the area indicated dewatering due to irrigation demand, and this project aims to lease water and secure minimum flows for resident fish. In this project, a lease of 0.5 cfs in a split-season water-rights lease will be obtained from the landowner, associated with reduced irrigation withdrawal. The goal of this project is to protect and enhance native fish habitat by securing additional water for instream flow.

### **Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared by FWP for the proposed project and released on September 28, 2015, for a 30-day public comment period. The draft EA was titled *Braziel Creek Instream Flow*.

The draft EA was posted and remains available for viewing on the FWP webpage:  
<http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices>.

### **Summary of Public Comment and FWP Response**

During the 30-day EA review period that ended October 28, 2015, no comments were received.

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment period. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final documents for these proposals.

### **Decision**

Based on the Environmental Assessment and public comment FWP will proceed with the proposed Braziel Creek instream flow lease.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michelle Mill", followed by a horizontal line.

Future Fisheries Improvement Program Officer  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Headquarters, Helena

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